



Terrestrial Restoration and Conservation Strategy

TRACS



G. and B. Côté @ CAS



Gary McLean



Tom Kogut



Gene Yates



Tom Kogut

Hundreds of wildlife and plant species and habitats contribute to a breathtaking level of biodiversity on Forest Service (FS) lands in Oregon and Washington. Many species and habitats are unique or extremely rare, some have undergone significant declines, and others are of high social or economic interest. Continued decreases in funding and resources raise challenging management questions about how to reach conservation and restoration goals.

What are the most critical species and habitats of conservation concern?

Where are the most important places to spend limited funding to conserve, restore, and enhance habitats and landscapes for these species?

TRACS is a strategic framework that addresses these questions on FS lands in the Pacific Northwest Region (R6).

To inform these decisions, the Terrestrial Restoration and Conservation Strategy (TRACS) provides a systematic process for analyzing species, habitats, and watersheds to help prioritize Region 6 conservation, restoration, and habitat enhancement activities. TRACS helps identify the places where animal, plant, habitat, and watershed priorities exist or overlap, and can be conserved, restored, or enhanced through collaboration and partnerships.

TRACS provides Forest natural resource staff, planners, and policy makers with:

- Maps
- Lists of priority species, habitats, and watersheds
- Databases
- Analysis tools

This information tool kit and prioritization framework enables users to implement the TRACS vision of strategic conservation, restoration, and enhancement to safeguard high-quality habitat and improve less-healthy ecosystems. In other words, **Protect the best and restore the rest.**



Nine ecoregions form the basis of the TRACS prioritization process:

- Canadian Rockies
- Columbia Plateau
- East Cascades/Modoc Plateau
- Klamath Mountains
- Middle Rockies/Blue Mountains
- North Cascades
- Pacific Northwest Coast
- Okanogan
- West Cascades



Funding running low?

Restoration, conservation, and enhancement activities cost money. The TRACS team recognizes that natural resource managers and planners are limited by declining budgets in implementing their programs of work. The Strategy points out potential opportunities for initiating projects which capitalize on multiple funding sources and the complementary expertise that partners and other disciplines offer.

For example ...

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Since the Upland Sandpiper is also a Region 6 sensitive species, funding could be obtained to support survey or habitat assessment efforts by submitting a proposal to the ISSSP. If partners such as local birding clubs, adjacent private landowners, The Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife are engaged, a Challenge Cost Share proposal would be appropriate to leverage partner funds and in-kind resources.

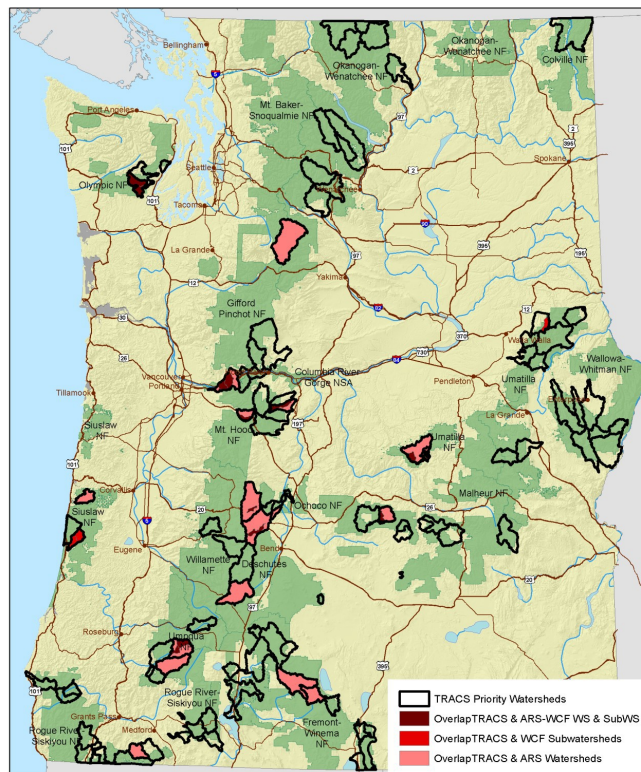
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Collaboration and integration are critical for the success of TRACS. Most of the TRACS conservation and restoration work will result from integration of actions to benefit priority species and habitats through collaboration with internal and external partners to plan vegetation, invasive species, fuels, recreation, engineering and other types of projects.

Not a source of additional work. TRACS does not represent a new responsibility for overworked field staff, nor is it meant to replace existing plans, programs or strategies. It is not regulatory.

Then what is it? TRACS is intended to be a resource that provides wildlife biologists and botanists with a clear set of regional priorities for conservation and restoration. For example, these priorities can help inform the terrestrial restoration needs in watershed action plans completed under the Watershed Condition Framework where priorities overlap.

For example ...



This map shows the overlap of TRACS priority watersheds with those identified by the Aquatic Restoration Strategy (ARS) and Watershed Condition Framework (WCF).

Existing programs and assessments

TRACS
facilitates linkage

The Nature Conservancy
Ecoregional Priorities

Oregon Conservation
Strategy Conservation
Opportunity Areas

Landscape-level
Connectivity Projects

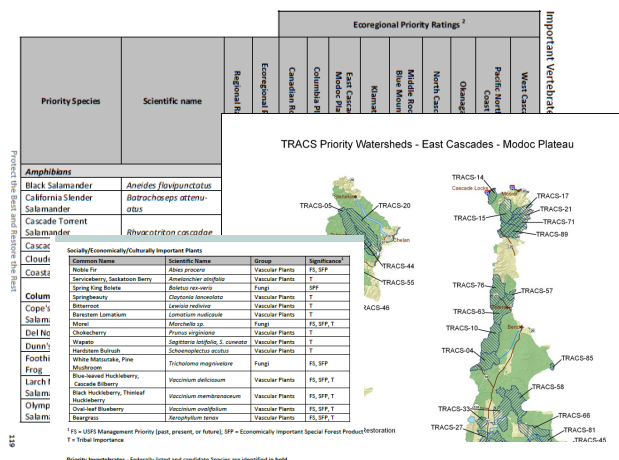
Interagency Special Status/
Sensitive Species Program

Landscape Treatment
Designer Program

Watershed Condition
Framework and
Terrestrial Condition
Assessment

Key components of TRACS

Regional priority species, habitats, and watersheds for nine ecoregions in Oregon and Washington. These form the foundation for strategic investment in habitat restoration and conservation work.



A framework for incorporating Regional priorities into Forest programs and projects. Examples show how to use the data and identify opportunities for action.

White-headed Woodpecker

White-headed Woodpecker. The White-headed Woodpecker is a year-round resident of dry coniferous forests, typically found in mature, open, Ponderosa Pine habitat. This habitat has declined more dramatically than any other forested habitat of the Interior Pacific Northwest (Wisdom et al. 2000). Dry forests are also the target of most restoration and fuels reduction projects in the Pacific Northwest Region. Ten watersheds were identified as priorities for late-seral Ponderosa Pine (see the Late-seral Ponderosa Pine Habitat example under Habitat Conservation and Restoration Watersheds). Conducting additional treatments in watersheds most important to White-headed Woodpeckers will provide additional benefit to this priority species.

The White-headed Woodpecker is a priority species in the Middle-Rockies/Blue Mountains Ecoregion. The *PriorTargetsRAPPlus1.xlsx* spreadsheet was filtered by ecoregion and species to create Table 2-4, which displays all of the watersheds in the Middle-Rockies/Blue Mountains Ecoregion that are most important for the White-headed Woodpecker. The Query Tool can also be used to find this information; and an example of how to do this is provided in Appendix C.

Projects in these watersheds should be designed to conserve, restore, or protect habitat for the species. Conserving and protecting the large Ponderosa Pine trees that these woodpeckers depend on is key. Many restoration treatments in dry forests are designed to reduce fuel loads and protect the stands from uncharacteristic



Recognition of the key role of wildlife and botany programs, as well as the importance of collaboration with internal and external partners.

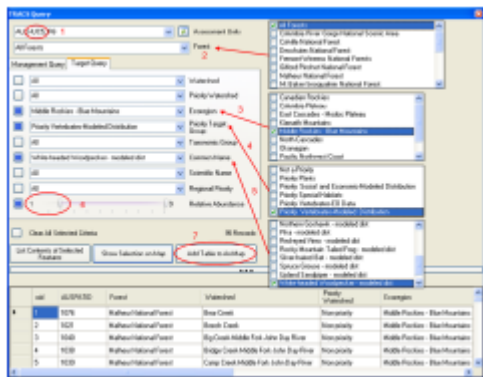
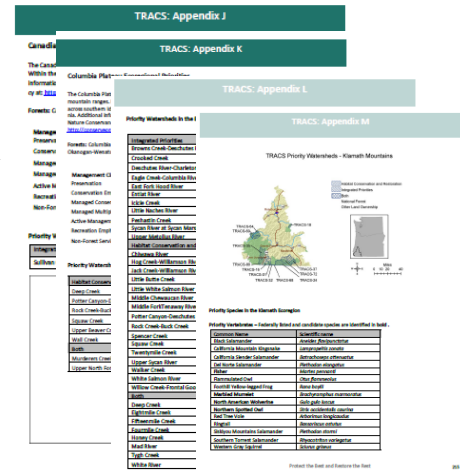
Guidelines for tracking accomplishments. This includes the ability to use the Wildlife, Fish, and Rare Plants (WFRP) database to evaluate and summarize projects that incorporate TRACS, which will help guide funding and resource allocation decisions by Regional Office staff.



Key components of TRACS

Appendices. The appendices contain all the information necessary to implement TRACS. Separate appendices for each ecoregion include:

- A description of the ecoregion with a link to additional information.
- Forests included in the ecoregion.
- The percentage of lands by management class.
- A list of the TRACS priority watersheds in the ecoregion, along with a map showing their location.
- Lists of TRACS priority species and habitats for the ecoregion.
- A description of each Priority Watershed in the ecoregion.



Additional tools and information. For those who wish to access more information for use in planning projects, several tools are available:

- Excel spreadsheets with data summaries.
- An Access database.
- A query tool for use in ArcMap.
- The complete geodatabase.

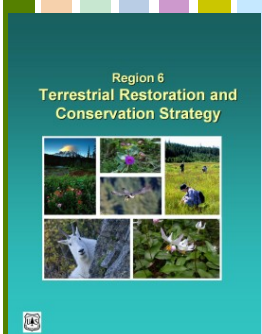


Use these tools with what you know.

The databases and other information provided on TRACS priorities do not contain spatial data with the specific location of priority habitats and conditions. Also, the priorities are intentionally Regional in scale and do not include all unique, Forest-level species or habitats. Forest and District staff can use the tools and information in conjunction with their experience and local knowledge to identify the locations of species and habitats for conservation and restoration actions.



Springs and Seeps
 Evening Fielding
 Huckleberry Enhancement Projects
 Upland Sandpiper
 Southern Torrent Salamander
 Elk
 Late-seral Ponderosa Pine



The first of its kind.

This Terrestrial Restoration and Conservation Strategy is an exciting opportunity to use newly developed Regional priorities to guide Forest Service program and project planning toward broad conservation goals. This is the first time a comprehensive tool has been available to identify the most important terrestrial species, habitats and watersheds within landscape-level ecoregions throughout a Forest Service region.

For more information:

Kim Mellen-McLean

Regional Wildlife Ecologist
 USDA Forest Service, PNW Region
 503-808-2677
kmellenmclean@fs.fed.us

Mark W. Skinner

Regional Botanist
 USDA Forest Service, PNW Region
 503-808-2150
miskinner02@fs.fed.us

Robert Alvarado

Regional Wildlife Program Leader
 USDA Forest Service, PNW Region
 503-808-2901
ralvarado@fs.fed.us

Elaine N. Rybak

Assistant Regional TES Wildlife Biologist
 USDA Forest Service, PNW Region
 503-808-2663
erybak@fs.fed.us

Vicky J. Erickson

Regional Geneticist & Native Plant Program Manager
 USDA Forest Service, PNW Region
 541-278-3715
verickson@fs.fed.us

Prepared by Rachel White, USFS PNW Research Station.

